

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 14, 2000 LB 950

CLERK: 37 ayes, 1 nay, Mr. President, on the adoption of the confirmation report.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: The report is adopted. (Visitor introduced.) We'll next move to General File, senator priority bills, LB 950. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 950, a bill introduced by Senator Byars and others. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 5 of this year, at that time referred to the Health Committee. The bill was reported to General File with committee amendments attached. I believe Senator Byars opened on his bill last Friday, Mr. President. I do have committee amendments pending.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Byars, since this was last week, I'm not going to give you a full opening, but would you just spend a couple minutes with the body, refresh us what the bill is, then I'll move directly to committee amendments.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, yes, I certainly would. Thank you for the time. Just to bring people up, current, we were on the committee amendments. We will have an amendment on the floor that does substantially change the bill. I think that I made it pretty clear to you the support from the medical community, the education community, the language and hearing community for this bill. We had some opposition from the insurance and business community when the bill was introduced. That opposition has fallen off as we have changed the bill by eliminating Section 12 and taking the mandated coverage out. I think I...I think all of you have received a packet of information, hopefully you brought it back with you, if not, I'm certainly open to more questions. I've told you the motivation that I have behind this bill, it's to test every infant's hearing. The studies that we passed out to you, one from the University of Colorado, Boulder, found that the identification of hearing loss by six months of age, followed by appropriate intervention is the most effective strategy for normal development of language in deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers. This can be accomplished through universal newborn hearing screening. I also passed out a piece to you on hearing